

D A N G E R O U S  
C O N N E C T I O N S :

O R,

L E T T E R S  
C O L L E C T E D I N A S O C I E T Y,

A N D

P U B L I S H E D F O R T H E I N S T R U C T I O N O F  
O T H E R S O C I E T I E S.

B Y M. C \* \* \* \* D E L \* \* \*.

I have observed the Manners of the Times, and have  
wrote those Letters.

J. J. ROUSSEAU. Pref. to the New Eloise.

V O L. I V.



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L O N D O N :

P R I N T E D F O R T. H O O K H A M,  
A t h i s C i r c u l a t i n g L i b r a r y, N e w B o n d S t r e e t,  
C o r n e r o f B r u t o n S t r e e t,

M. D C C. L X X I V.

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D A N G E R O U  
C O N N E C T I O N S.

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L E T T E R C X X V.

*Viscount de VALMONT to the Marchio-  
ness de MERTEUIL.*

**A**T last this haughty woman is conquered, who dared think she could resist me. — She is mine — totally mine — She has nothing left to grant since yesterday.

My happiness is so great I cannot appreciate it, but am astonished at the

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B

unknown

unknown charm I feel : — Is it possible virtue can augment a woman's value even at the time of her weakness ? — Avaunt such puerile ideas — don't we every day meet resistance more or less feigned at the first conquest ? Yet I never experienced the charm I mean ; it is not love — for although I have had fits of weakness with this amazing woman, which very much resembled that pusillanimous passion, I ever subdued them and returned to my first rules — if even the scene of yesterday should have led me farther than I intended ; had I partook for a moment of the intoxication I raised, that transitory illusion would have been now evaporated, yet still the same charm remains — I own I should be pleased to indulge it, if it did not give me some uneasiness : — At my age must I then be mastered like a school-boy by an unknown and involuntary sentiment ? —

I must

## C O N N E C T I O N S. 1

I must first oppose and then examine it.

Perhaps I already see into the cause — the idea pleases me — I wish it may be true.

Among the multitude of women with whom I have played the part of a lover, I never met any who were not as well inclined to surrender as I was to persuade them — I used even to call those *prudes* who met me but half way, in contrast to so many others, whose provoking defence is intended as a cloak to their first advances.

But here I found an unfavourable prepossession against me, afterwards confirmed on the report and advice of a penetrating woman who hated me; a natural, excessive timidity, fortified with genuine modesty; a strong attachment to virtue under the powerful direction of religion, and who had already been married two years — an unsullied character — the result of

those causes, which all tended to screen her from my solicitations.

It is not any way similar to my former adventures— a mere capitulation more or less advantageous, which is easier to be acquired than to be vain of; but this is a complete victory, purchased by a hard campaign, and decided by skilful manœuvres, therefore it is not at all surprising, this success, solely my own acquisition, should be dear to me; and the increase of pleasure I experienced in my triumph, which I still feel, is no more than the soft impression of a sentiment of glory. I indulge this thought, as it saves me the humiliation of harbouring the idea of my being dependent on the very slave I have brought under subjection, as well as the disagreeable thoughts of not having within myself the plenitude of my happiness, or that the power of calling it forth into energy and making me fully enjoy it, should be

## C O N N E C T I O N S.

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be revived for this or that woman exclusively of every other.

Those judicious reflections shall regulate my conduct on this important occasion; and you may depend, I shall never suffer myself to be so captivated, but that I may at pleasure break those new bands:— Already I begin to talk of a rupture, and have not yet informed you how I acquired the powers — proceed and you will see to what dangers wisdom exposes itself endeavouring to assist folly — I studied my conversation and the answers to them with so much attention, I hope to be able to give you both with the utmost exactitude.

You will observe by the annexed copies of letters, \* what kind of mediator I fixed on to gain me admittance with my fair one; with what zeal the holy man exercised himself

\* Letters cxx and cxxii.



to reunite us; I must tell you also, I learned from an intercepted letter, according to custom, the dread the humiliation of being left, had a little disconcerted the austere devotee's prudence, and stuffed her head and heart with ideas and sentiments which, though destitute of common sense, were nevertheless interesting — After these preliminaries necessary to be related, yesterday, Thursday the 28th, the day appointed by my ingrate, I presented myself as a timid and repentant slave, to retire a successful conqueror.

It was six in the evening when I came to the fair recluse; for since her return, her gates were shut against every one. She endeavoured to rise when I was announced; but her trembling knees being unable to support her, she was obliged to sit down immediately. The servant who had showed me in, having something to do in the apartment,

ment,

ment, she seemed impatient. This interval was taken up with the usual compliments. Not to lose a moment of so precious an opportunity, I examined the room carefully, and fixed my eye on the intended spot for my victory. I could have chose a more commodious one ; for there was a sofa in the room : but I observed directly opposite to it a picture of the husband ; and I own I was afraid with so strange a woman, a single glance, which accidentally she might cast on that side, would in an instant have destroyed a work of so much care. At last we were alone, and I entered on the business.

After relating in few words, I supposed Father Anselmus had informed her the motive of my visit, I lamented the rigorous treatment I received, and dwelt particularly on the *contempt* that had been shewn. She made an apology, as I expected, and you also :



but I grounded the proof on the diffidence and dread I had infused; on the scandalous flight in consequence of it, the refusal to answer my letters, or even receive them, &c. &c. As she was beginning a justification, which would have been very easy, I thought proper to interrupt her; and to compensate for this abrupt behaviour, I immediately threw in a flattery. “If such charms,” said I, “have made so deep an impression on my heart, so many virtues have made as great a one on my mind. Seduced by the desire of imitating them, I had the vanity to think myself worthy of them. I do not reproach you for thinking otherwise; but I punish myself for my error.” As she preserved a silent perplexity I went on. “I wish, Madam, to be justified in your sight, or obtain your pardon for all the wrongs you suppose me to have been guilty of; that

## CONNECTIONS.

“ that I may, at least, terminate it.  
“ tranquillity a life which is no lon-  
“ ger supportable since you refuse to  
“ embellish it.”

To this, however, she endeavoured to reply, “ My duty would not per-  
“ mit me.” — The difficulty to finish the fib which duty required, did not allow her to end the sentence. I replied in the most tender strain, “ Is  
“ it true, then, it was me you fled  
“ from? — this retreat was necessary  
“ — and that you should put me  
“ from you? — it must be so — and  
“ for ever — I should —” It is unnecessary to tell you, during this short dialogue, the tender prude’s voice was oppressed, and she did not raise her eyes.

I thought it was time to animate this languishing scene; and rising in a pet, — “ Your resolution, Madam,” said I, “ has given me back mine.  
“ We will part; and part for ever:

B 5

“ you

“ you will have leisure to congratulate yourself on your work.” Surprised with this reproaching tone, she should have replied — “ The resolution you have taken,” said she — “ Is only the effect of despair,” I replied with passion. “ It is your pleasure I should be miserable — you shall have the full extent of your wish. I wish you to be happy.” Here the voice began to announce a strong emotion : then falling at her knees, in the dramatic style, I exclaimed, “ Ah, cruel woman ! Can there be happiness for me that you do not partake ? How then shall I find it, when absent from you ? Oh, never, never !” — I own, in abandoning myself thus, I depended much on the assistance of tears ; but, whether for want of disposition, or, perhaps, only the continual, painful attention my mind was engaged in, I could not weep. Fortunately I recollected,

2

lected,

lected, all means are equally good to subdue a woman ; and it would be sufficient to astonish her by a grand movement, to make a deep and favourable impression. I therefore made terror supply the place of absent sensibility ; changing only my tone, but still preserving my posture, I continued, “ Yes, at your feet I swear I “ will die or possess you.” As I pronounced those last words our eyes met. I don’t know what the timid woman saw, or thought she saw, in mine ; but she rose with a terrified countenance, and escaped from my arms, which surrounded her waist : it is true, I did not attempt to hold her ; for I have often observed, those scenes of despair became ridiculous when pushed with too much vivacity, or lengthened out, and left no resource but what was really tragic, of which I had not the least idea. Whilst she fled from me, I added in a low dis-

astrous tone, but so that she might hear, "Well then, death."

I rose silently, and casting a wild look on her, as if by chance, nevertheless observed her unsteady deportment, her quick respiration, her contracted muscles, her trembling, half-raised arms; every thing gave me sufficient evidence, the effect was such as I wished to produce: but as in love nothing can be brought to issue at a distance, and we were pretty far asunder, it was necessary to draw nearer. To attain which, I assumed, as soon as possible, an apparent tranquillity, proper to calm the effects of this violent agitation, without weakening the impression. My transition was: —  
"I am very miserable. I only wished to live for your happiness, and I have disturbed it:" — then with a composed but constrained air; —  
"Forgive me, Madam; little used to the rage of passions, I do not know



“ know how to suppress their vio-  
“ lence. If I am wrong in giving  
“ way to them, I beg you will re-  
“ member it shall be the last time.  
“ Compose yourself ; I entreat you  
“ compose yourself.” During this  
long discourse, I drew near insensibly.  
“ If you wish I should be calm,” re-  
plied the terrified fair, “ do you then  
“ be calm.” “ I will, then, I pro-  
“ mise you,” said I ; and in a weaker  
tone, “ If the effort is great, it ought  
“ not at least to be long : but I came  
“ to return your letters. I request you  
“ will take them. This afflicting sa-  
“ crifice is the only one remaining ;  
“ let me have nothing to weaken my  
“ resolution.” Then drawing from  
my pocket the precious collection—  
“ Here is the deceitful deposit of  
“ your friendship : it made this life  
“ supportable ; take it back, and  
“ give the signal that is to separate  
“ us for ever.” Here the timid lo-  
ver



ver gave way to her tender grief —

“ But, M. de Valmont, what is the

“ matter? What do you mean? Is

“ not your proceeding to-day your

“ own voluntary act? Is it not the

“ result of your own reflections? And

“ is it not they have approved this

“ necessary step, in compliance with

“ my duty?” I replied, “ Well, this

“ step decides mine.” — “ And what

“ is that?” — “ The only one that

“ can put an end to my sufferings,

“ by parting me from you.” — “ But

“ answer me what is it.” — Then

pressing her in my arms without any

opposition, and observing from the

neglect of decency, how strong and

powerful her emotions were, I ex-

claimed, “ Adorable woman! you

“ can’t conceive the love you inspire.

“ You will never know how much

“ you was adored, and how much

“ dearer this passion was than my ex-

“ istence. May all your days be for-

“ tunate

“ fortunate and peaceful ! May they be  
 “ decorated with that happiness you  
 “ have deprived me of ! At least, repay  
 “ this sincere wish with one sigh, one  
 “ tear ; and be assured, the last sacri-  
 “ fice I make will not be the most  
 “ painful to my heart. Adieu !”

Whilst I spoke, I felt her heart throb violently ; her countenance altered ; her tears almost suffocated her. Then I resolved to feign retreat : but she held me strongly. — “ No, hear what I have to say,” said she, eagerly. I answered, “ Let me go.” — “ You shall hear me.” — “ I must fly from you ; I must.” — “ No,” she exclaimed ; then sunk, or rather swooned in my arms. I was still doubtful of so happy an issue, seemed much terrified, and still led, or rather carried her to the place I had marked out for the field of glory. She did not recover herself until she  
 was

was submitted, and given up to her happy conqueror.

So far, my lovely friend, you will perceive a methodical neatness, which I am sure will give you pleasure. You will also observe, I did not swerve in the least from the true principles of this war, which we have often remarked bore so near a resemblance to the other. Rank me, then, with the Turennes or the Fredericks. I forced the enemy to fight who was temporising. By skilful manœuvres, gained the advantage of the ground and dispositions; contrived to lull the enemy into security, to come up with him more easily in his retreat; struck him with terror before we engaged. I left nothing to chance; only a great advantage, in case of success; or a certainty of resources, in case of a defeat. Finally, the action did not begin till I had secured a retreat, by which I might cover and preserve all my former

mer

mer conquests. What more could be done? But I begin to fear I have enervated myself, as Hannibal did with the delights of Capua.

I expected so great an event we should not pass over without the customary tears and grief. First I observed somewhat more of confusion and recollection than is usual, which I attributed to her state of prudery. Without paying much attention to those slight differences, which I imagined merely local, I followed the beaten road of consolation; fully persuaded, as commonly happens, the sensations would fly to the assistance of sentiment, that one act would prevail more than all my speeches, which I did not, however, neglect: but I met with a resistance really tremendous; less for its excess, than the form under which it appeared. Only think of a woman sitting stiff and motionless, with unalterable features; seeming divested  
of

of the faculties of thinking, hearing, or understanding, from whose eyes tears flowed without effort. Such was M. de Tourvet during my conversation. If I endeavoured to recal her attention by a caress, or even the most innocent gesture, terror immediately followed this apparent apathy, accompanied with suffocation, convulsions, sobs, and shrieks by intervals, but without a word articulated. Those fits returned several times, and always stronger; the last was even so violent, I was much frightened, and thought I had gained a fruitless victory. I returned to the usual common-place phrases — “What do you then regret you have made me the happiest man on earth?” At those words this adorable woman turned to me; her countenance, although still a little wild, had yet recovered its celestial expression. “The happiest?” said she. — You may guess my reply.

“You



“ You are happy, then ?” — I renewed my protestations. “ Have I made you happy ?” — I added praises, and every thing tender. Whilst I was speaking, all her members were stilled ; she fell back softly in her chair, giving up a hand I ventured to take. “ This idea relieves and consoles me,” said she.

You well believe, being thus brought back in the right road, I quitted it no more ; it certainly was the best, and, perhaps, the only one. When I made a second attempt, I met some resistance ; what had happened before made me more circumspect : but having called on my idea of happiness for assistance, I soon experienced its favourable influence. “ You are right,” replied the tender creature, “ I can support my existence no longer than it contributes to your happiness. I devote myself entirely to you. From this moment I

“ give



“ give myself up to you. You shall  
“ no more experience regret or refusal from me.” Thus with artless or sublime candor did she deliver me her person and charms, encreasing my happiness by sharing it. The intoxication was complete and reciprocal : for the first time mine survived the pleasure. I quitted her arms, only to throw myself at her feet, and swear eternal love. To own the truth, I spoke as I thought. Even after we parted, I could not shake off the idea ; and I found it necessary to make extraordinary efforts to divert my attention from her.

I wish you were now here, to counterpoise the charm of the action by the reward : but I hope I shall not lose by waiting ; for I look on the happy arrangement I proposed in my last letter as a settled point between us. You see I dispatch business as I promised : my affairs will be so  
for-

forward, I shall be able to give you some part of my time. Quickly get rid, then, of the stupid Belleruche, and leave the whining Danceny to be engrossed solely by me. How is your time taken up in the country? You don't even answer my letters. Do you know, I have a great mind to scold you? Only prosperity is apt to make us indulgent. Besides, I can't forget ranging myself again under your banner. I must submit to your little whim. Remember, however, the new lover will not surrender any of the ancient rights of the friend.

Adieu, as formerly! — Adieu, my angel! I send you the softest kisses of love.

P. S. Poor Prevan, at the end of his month's imprisonment, was obliged to quit his corps; it is public all over Paris. Upon my word he is cruelly treated, and your success is complete.

*Paris, Oct. 29, 17—.*

L E T.

## L E T T E R CXXVI.

*Madame de ROSEMOND to the Presi-  
dente de TOURVEL.*

I WOULD have answered your letter sooner, my dear child, if the fatigue of my last had not brought on a return of my disorder, which has deprived me ever since of the use of my arm. I was very anxious to thank you for the good news you gave me of my nephew, and not less to congratulate you sincerely on your own account. Here the interposition of Providence is visible, that touching the heart of the one has also saved the other. Yes, my lovely dear! the Almighty, who sent you this trial, has assisted you in the moment your strength was exhausted; and notwithstanding

standing your little murmurings, I think you have great reason to return him your unfeigned thanks : not but I believe you would have been very glad to have been the first in this resolution, and that Valmont's should have been the consequence of it ; I even think, humanly speaking, the dignity of our sex would have been better preserved, and we are not fond of giving up any of our rights. But what are these considerations to those more important objects ! We seldom hear a person saved from shipwreck complain, the means were not in his option.

You will soon experience, my dear child, the afflictions you dreaded so much will grow lighter of themselves, and even were they to last for ever in their full force, you will be sensible they are easier to bear than the remorse of guilt or self-contempt. It would have been useless to talk to  
 you

you before with this apparent feverity: love is an independent passion, that prudence may make us avoid, but cannot conquer, which when once it has taken root, must die its own natural death, or of absolute despair. This last being your case, gives me the resolution and the right to tell you freely my sentiments. It is cruel to frighten a sick person that is despaired of, to whom palliatives only and consolations should be administered: but it is the part of wisdom to remind those on the recovery, of the dangers they escaped, to assist them with necessary prudence and submission to the advice they stand in need of. As you have chose me for your physician, in that character I address you, and tell you, the little inconveniencies you feel at present, which may require, perhaps, some remedies, are nothing in comparison of the dreadful disorder whose cure is now certain.



certain. Then, as your friend, as the friend of a virtuous and reasonable woman, give me leave to add, this passion you have subdued, so unhappy in itself, became infinitely more so in its object. If I am to believe what I am told, my nephew, who I must own I love even to a degree of weakness, unites many laudable qualities to a great many attractions, is very dangerous to the women, blameable in his behaviour towards them, and piques himself as much on exposing as seducing them. I really believe you would have converted him. Sure never was any one so worthy ; however, so many others flattered themselves in the same manner, whose hopes were frustrated, that I am overjoyed to find you are not reduced to that resource.

Reflect now, my dear woman, that instead of so many dangers as you would have had to go through, you



will have, besides the testimony of a good conscience and your own peace, the satisfaction of being the cause of Valmont's reformation. I own, I think it in a great measure owing to your resolute defence, and that a moment's weakness on your part would have left my nephew in lasting disorders. I love to indulge this way of thinking, and wish you to do the same; you will find it consoling; it will be an additional reason for me to love you the more.

I shall expect you in a few days, my dear child, as you promised. You will once more find serenity and happiness where you lost them. Come and rejoice with your tender mother, that you have so happily kept your word to do nothing unworthy yourself or her.

*Castle of —,*  
*Oct. 30, 17—.*

L E T-

LETTER CXXVII.

*The Marchioness de MERTEUIL to  
the Viscount de VALMONT.*

IT was not for want of time, that I did not answer your letter of the 19th, Viscount, but plainly because it put me out of temper, and did not contain a single syllable of common sense. I thought it then the best way to leave it in oblivion — but since you seem fond of this production, and the sublime ideas it contains, that you construe my silence into consent, it is necessary you should have my opinion explicitly.

I may have heretofore formed the design of singly performing the functions of a whole seraglio ; but it never

entered my head to become only a part of one ; this I thought you knew, now, that you cannot plead ignorance, you may readily conceive how ridiculous your proposition must appear to me. Should I sacrifice an inclination, and a new one, for you ? And in what manner, pray ? Why, waiting for my turn, like a submissive slave, the sublime favours of your *highness*. When, for example, you was inclined to relax for a moment from *that unknown charm* that the *adorable, the celestial* M. de Tourvel only had made you feel ; — or when you dread to risk with the *engaging Cecilia*, the superior idea you wished her to preserve for you ; — then condescending to stoop to me, you will seek pleasures less violent, but of not much consequence, and your inestimable bounty, though scarce, must fill the measure of my felicity. Certainly you stand high in your own opinion ; and my modesty nor my  
glass

glass have yet prevailed on me to think I am sunk so low. This may be owing to my wrong way of thinking; but I beg you will be persuaded I have more imaginations of the same kind.

One especially, which is, that *Danceny, the school-boy, the rebiner*, totally taken up with me, sacrificing, without making a merit of it, his first love, even before it was enjoyed, and loving me to that excess that is usual with those at his age, may contribute more to my happiness and pleasure than you — I will even take the liberty to add, that if I had the inclination to give him a partner, it should not be you, at least now.

Perhaps you'll ask me why? Probably I should be at a loss for a reason; for the same whim that would give you the preference, might also exclude you. However, politeness requires I should inform you of my mo-

tive — I think you must make too many sacrifices; and instead of being grateful, as you certainly would expect, I should be inclined to think you still owed me more — You must therefore be sensible, our manner of thinking being so opposite, we can by no means unite: I fear it will be some time, nay a great while, before I change my opinion.

When that happens, I promise to give you notice: — Until then, let me advise you to take some other measures, and keep your kisses for those to whom they will be more agreeable.

You say *adieu, as formerly!* but formerly, if I remember, you set a greater value on me than to appoint me entirely to the third characters; and was content to wait until I answered in the affirmative, before you was certain of my consent: don't be  
angry

angry then, if instead of saying adieu, as formerly, I say adieu, as at present.

Your servant, Viscount.

*The castle of ———,*

*Oct. 31, 17—.*

## L E T T E R CXXVIII.

*The Presidente de TOURVEL to Madame de ROSEMONDE.*

I DID not receive, until yesterday, Madam, your dilatory answer — it would instantly have put an end to my existence if I had any left; but M. de Valmont is now in possession of it: you see I do not conceal any thing from you; if you no longer think me worthy your friendship, I dread the



loss of it less than to impose on you : to tell you all in all, I was placed by M. de Valmont, between his death and happiness — I chose the latter — I neither boast nor accuse myself; I relate the fact plainly as it is.

You will readily perceive, after this, what kind of impression your letter, and the truths it contains, must have made on me. Do not, however, imagine, it could give birth to any repining, or ever make me alter my sentiments or conduct; not that I am exempt from some torturing moments; but when my heart is rent, and I dread not being any longer able to bear my torments, I say to myself, Valmont is happy; and at this idea my miseries vanish; all is converted into joy.

It is to your nephew, then, I have devoted myself; it is for his sake I am undone; he is now the center of my thoughts, sentiments, and actions.

Whilst

Whilst my life can contribute to his happiness, I shall cherish it; I shall think it fortunate; if he should hereafter think otherwise, he shall never hear from me either complaint or reproach. I have already ventured to fix my eyes on this fatal period, and my resolution is taken.

You will now perceive how little I am affected with the dread you seem to entertain, that M. de Valmont, with one day or other defame me — Before that happens, he must lose the affection he has for me; that once lost, of what signification will vain reproaches be which I shall never hear? He alone will judge me, as I will have lived for him, and him only; and my memory will repose in him; and if he will be obliged to acknowledge I loved him, I shall be justified sufficiently.

Now, Madam, you read my heart — I preferred the misfortune of being deprived of your esteem by my candour,

dour, to that of making myself unworthy of it by the baseness of a lie. I thought I owed this entire confidence to your former goodness ; the addition of a word would, perhaps, give room to suspect I should be vain enough yet to depend on it ; far from it : I will do myself justice, by giving up all pretensions to it.

I am with great respect, Madam, your most humble and most obedient servant.

*Paris, Nov. 1, 17—.*

L E T.

## L E T T E R CXXIX.

*Viscount de VALMONT to the Marchioness  
de MERTEUIL.*

**W**HENCE arises, my charming friend, this strain of acrimony and ridicule which runs through your last letter? What crime have I unintentionally committed which puts you so much out of temper? You reproach me with presuming on your consent before I had obtained it—I imagined, however, what might appear like presumption in any one else, would, between you and me, be only the effect of confidence. I would be glad to know how long has this sentiment been detrimental to friendship or love? Uniting hope with desire, I only com-  
C 6,
plied

plied with that natural impulse, which makes us wish to draw as near as possible to the happiness we are in pursuit of — and you have mistaken that for vanity, which is nothing more than ardour. I know very well, in such cases, custom has introduced a respectful apprehension; but you also know, it is only a kind of form, a mere precedent; and I imagined myself authorised to believe those trifling niceties no longer necessary between us.

I even think this free and open method much preferable to insipid flattery, which so often love nauseates, when it is grounded on an old connection. Moreover, perhaps the preference I give this method, proceeds from the happiness it recalls to my memory — this gives me more uneasiness that you should take it in another light. However, this is the only thing that I am culpable in —  
for



for I cannot believe you can seriously imagine, that the woman exists who I would prefer to you ; and still less, that I should estimate you so little as you feign to believe. You say, you have consulted your glass on this occasion, and you do not find yourself sunk so low — I believe it ; and that only proves your glass to be true — but should you not rather from thence concluded that certainly that was not my opinion.

In vain I seek the cause of this strange idea — however, I suspect it is more or less dependent on the praises I lavished on other women — at least, this I infer, from the affectation of quoting the epithets, *adorable, celestial, attacking*, which I used, speaking of Madam de Tourvel, and the little Volanges : but you are not to be told, those words, which are oftner the effect of chance than reflection, express more the situation  
 one

one happens to be in at the time, than the value one sets upon the person. If at the time I was affected with the one or the other, I nevertheless rapturously wished for you.— If I gave you an eminent preference over both, as I would not renew our first connection without breaking off the two others, I do not think there is such great reason for reproaches.

I shall not find it more difficult to exculpate myself from the charge of the *unknown charm*, which, it seems, shocks you not a little; for being unknown, it does not follow that it is stronger — What can equal the delights you alone can always embellish with novelty and bliss? I only wished to convey to you an idea, it was a kind I never before experienced; but without pretending to give it any rank; and added, what I again repeat, whatever it be, I will overcome it: and shall exert myself more zealously

zealously if I can in this trifling affair, to have one homage more to offer to you.

As to the little Cecilia, it is useless to mention her: you have not forgot it was at your instance I took charge of this child; and only wait your orders to be rid of her. I may have made some remarks on her bloom and innocence; and for a moment thought her *engaging*, because one is always more or less pleased with their work; but she has not, in any shape, consistency to fix the attention.

Now, my lovely friend, I appeal to your justice, your first attachment to me, the long and sincere friendship, the unbounded confidence which have ~~linked~~ linked us together — have I deserved the severe manner in which you have treated me? But how easy can you make me amends when you please!

please! Speak but the word, and you will see whether all the charms, all the attachments will keep me here, not a day, but even a minute; I will fly to your feet — into your arms — and will prove a thousand times, and in a thousand ways, that you are, you ever will be, the only mistress of my heart.

Adieu, my lovely friend! I wait your answer impatiently.

*Paris, Nov. 3, 17. —*

  
L E T-

# CONNECTIONS.

## LETTER CXXX.

*Madame de ROSEMONDE, to the Pre-  
sidente de Tourvel.*

**W**HY, my lovely dear, will you no longer be my daughter? Why do you seem to announce that our correspondence is to cease? \* Is it to punish me for not guessing at what was improbable; or do you suspect me of creating you affliction designedly? I know your heart too well, to imagine you would entertain such an opinion of mine. — The distress your letter plunges me in is much less on my own account than yours. Oh! my young friend, with grief I tell you,

\* See Letter cxxviii.



## **D A N G E R O U S**

you are too worthy of being beloved ever to be happy in love — Where is there a truly delicate and sensible woman, who has not met unhappiness where she expected bliss? Do men know how to rate the women they possess?

Not but many of them are virtuous in their addresses and constant in their affections — but even among those, how few that know how to put themselves in unison with our hearts. I do not imagine, my dear child, their affection is like ours — They experience the same transport often with more violence, but they are strangers to that uneasy officiousness, that delicate solicitude, that produces in us those continual tender cares, whose sole aim is the beloved object — Man enjoys the happiness he feels, woman that she gives.

This difference, so essential, and so seldom observed, influences in a very  
sensible

sensible manner, the totality of their respective conduct. The pleasure of the one is to gratify desires; but that of the other is to create them.. To know to please, is in man the means of success; and in woman it is success itself.

And do not imagine, the exceptions, be they more or less numerous, that may be quoted, can be successfully opposed to those general truths, which the voice of the public has guaranteed, with the only distinction as to men of infidelity from inconstancy; a distinction of which they avail themselves, and of which they should be ashamed; which never has been adopted by any of our sex but those of abandoned characters, who are a scandal to us, and to whom all methods are acceptable which they think may deliver them from the painful sensation of their own meanness.

I thought,

I thought, my lovely dear, those reflections might be of use to you, in order to oppose the chimerical ideas of perfect happiness, with which love never fails to amuse our imagination. Deceitful hope! to which we are still attached, even when we find ourselves under the necessity of abandoning it — whose loss multiplies and irritates our already too real sorrows, inseparable from an ardent passion — This task of alleviating your troubles, or diminishing their number, is the only one I will or can now fulfil — In disorders which are without remedy, no other advice can be given, than as to the regimen to be observed — The only thing I wish you to remember is, that to pity is not to blame a patient. Alas! who are we, that we dare blame one another? Let us leave the right of judging to the searcher of hearts; and I will even venture to believe, that in his paternal sight, a crowd of virtues,

tues,

tues may compensate a single weakness.

But I conjure you above all things, my dear friend, to guard against violent resolutions, which are less the effects of fortitude than despondency: do not forget, that although you have made another possessor of your existence (to use your own expression) you had it not in your power to deprive your friends of the share they were before possessed of, and which they will always claim.

Adieu, my dear child! Think sometimes on your tender mother; and be assured you always will be, above every thing, the dearest object of her thoughts.

*Castle of ———*

L E T-

## L E T T E R CXXXI.

*The Marchioness de MERTEUIL to the  
Viscount de VALMONT.*

**V**ERY well, Viscount; come, I am better pleased with you than I was before: now let us converse in a friendly manner, and I hope to convince you, the scheme you propose would be the highest act of folly in us both.

Have you never observed that pleasure, which is the *primum mobile* of the union of the sexes, is not sufficient to form a connection between them? and that if desire, which brings them together, precedes it, it is nevertheless followed by disgust, which repels it — This is a law of nature, that love alone can alter; and pray,  
can



can we have this same love at will? It is then necessary it should be always ready, which would have been very troublesome had it not been discovered; it is sufficient if it exists on one side: by this means the difficulty is lessened by half, even without apparent prejudice; for the one enjoys the happiness of loving, the other of pleasing—not perhaps in altogether so lively a manner, but that is compensated by deceit, which makes the balance, and then all is right.

But say, Viscount, which of us two will undertake to deceive the other? You know the story of the two sharpers who discovered each other at play—“We must not prejudice ourselves,” said they; “let us club for the cards, and leave off.” Let us follow this prudent advice, nor lose time together, which we may so usefully employ elsewhere.

To convince you that I consult your interest as much as my own, and that I am not actuated either by ill humour or capriciousness, I will not refuse your reward — I am very sensible one night will be sufficient; and do not in the least doubt, we shall know how to make it so pleasing, the morning will come with regret — but let us not forget, this regret is necessary to happiness; although the illusion may be enchanting, nor flatter ourselves it can be durable.

You see I fulfil my promise in my turn, and even before you perform the conditions stipulated — for I was to have had your celestial prude's first letter. Whether you do not chuse to part with it, or that you have forgot the conditions of a bargain that is not so interesting to you as you would have me think, I have not received any thing; and I am much mistaken, or the tender devotee must have wrote  
a great

a great deal; for how can she employ her time alone? she certainly has not sense enough for dissipation? If I was inclined, then, I have room to make you some little reproaches, which I shall pass over in silence, in consideration of the petulance I perhaps shewed in my last letter.

Nothing more remains, now, Viscount, but to make you a request, and it is as much for you as myself; that is, to defer the time, which perhaps I wish for as much as you, but which I think may be put off until my return to town. On the one hand, it would be very inconvenient here; and on the other, it would be running too great a risk; for a little jealousy would fix me with the dismal Belleruche, who no longer holds but by a thread. He is already struggling to love me; we are at present so critically circumstanced, I blend as much malice as prudence in the ca-

resses I lavish on him; at the same time you will observe, it would not be a sacrifice worthy of you — A reciprocal infidelity will add power to the charm.

Do you know I regret sometimes we are reduced to those resources — At the time we loved each other, for I believe it was love, I was happy — and you, Viscount — but why engage our thoughts on a happiness that can never return? No, say what you will, it is impossible — First, I should require sacrifices that you could not or would not make; that probably I do not deserve. Again, how is it possible to fix you? Oh, no; I will not even think of it; and notwithstanding the pleasure I now have in writing to you, I prefer quitting you abruptly. Adieu, Viscount.

*Castle of —,*  
*Nov. 17, 17—.*

L E T-

LETTER CXXXII.

*The Presidente de TOURVEL to Madame  
de ROSEMONDE.*

DEEPLY impressed, Madam, with your goodness, to which I would entirely abandon myself, if I was not restrained from accepting by the dread of profaning it. Why, convinced of its inestimable value, must I know myself no longer worthy of it? Let me, at least, attempt to testify my gratitude. I shall admire, above all, the lenity of virtue, which views weakness with the eye of compassion; whose powerful charm preserves its forcible but mild authority over hearts, even by the side of the charm of love.

Can I still be worthy a friendship, which is no longer useful to my hap-



pinefs? I muſt ſay the ſame of your advice. I feel its force, but cannot follow it. How is it poſſible to diſcredit perfect happineſs, when I experience it this moment? If men are ſuch as you deſcribe them, they muſt be ſhunned, they are hateful: but where is the reſemblance between Valmont and them? If, in common with them, he has that violence of paſſion you call tranſport, is it not reſtrained by delicacy? My dear friend, you talk of ſharing my troubles; take a part, then, in my happineſs; to love I am indebted for it, and how immenſely does the object raiſe its value! You love your nephew, you ſay, perhaps, with fondneſs: ah! if you knew him as I do, you would idolize him, and yet even leſs than he deſerves. He has undoubtedly been led aſtray by ſome errors; he does not conceal it; but who like him ever  
knew

knew what was love? What can I say more? He feels it as he inspires it.

You will think this is *one of the chimerical ideas with which love never fails to abuse our imagination*: but in my case, why should he be more tender, more earnest, when he has nothing farther to obtain? I will own, I formerly thought I observed an air of reflection and reserve, which seldom left him, and which often, contrary to my inclination, recalled to me the false and cruel impressions that were given me of him; but since he has abandoned himself without constraint to the emotions of his heart, he seems to guess at all my desires. Who knows but we were born for each other? If this happiness was not reserved for me to be necessary to his! — Ah! if it be an illusion, let me die before it ends. — No, I must live to cherish, to adore him. Why should he cease loving me? What woman on earth

could he make happier than me? And I experience it by myself, this happiness that he has given rise to, is the only and the strongest tie. It is this delicious sentiment that exalts and purifies love, and becomes truly worthy a tender and generous mind, such as Valmont's.

Adieu, my dear, my respectable, my indulgent friend! Vainly should I think of continuing my letter. This is the hour he promised to come, and every idea flies before him. Your pardon. But you wish me happiness; it is now so great I can scarce support it.

*Paris, Nov. 7, 17—.*

L E T.

## L E T T E R CXXXIII.

*The Viscount de VALMONT to the  
Marchioness de MERTEUIL.*

WHAT, then, my charming friend, are those sacrifices you think I would not make to your pleasure? Let me only know them; and if I hesitate to offer them to you, I give you leave to refuse the homage. What opinion have you of late conceived of me, when even favourably inclined, you doubt my sentiments or inclinations? Sacrifices that I would not or could not make! So you think I am in love, subdued! The value I set on the success, you suspect is attached to the person. Ah! thank heaven, I am not yet reduced to that, and I offer to prove it. I will prove it,

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it, if even it should be at Madame de Tourvel's expence. Certainly after that you cannot have a doubt remaining.

I may, I believe, without committing myself, give up some time to a woman, who, at least, has the merit of being of a cast rarely met. The dead season, perhaps, when this adventure took its rise, was another reason to give myself totally up to it; even now that the grand current of company scarcely begins to flow, it is not surprising my time is almost entirely taken up with her. I beg you will also recollect, it is scarce eight days I enjoy the fruits of three months labour. I have often indulged longer with what has not been so valuable, and had not cost me so much; and yet you never from thence drew any conclusions against me.

Shall I tell you the real cause of my assiduity? It is this. She is naturally  
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of a timid disposition; at first she doubted incessantly of her happiness, which was sufficient to disturb it; so that I but just begin to observe how far my power extends in this kind. This I was curious to know, and the occasions are not so readily offered as one may think.

In the first place, pleasure is nothing but mere pleasure with a great number of women, and never any thing else; with them, whatever titles they think proper to adorn us with, we are never but factors, simple commissioners, whose activity is all their merit, and among whom he who performs most is always esteemed the best.

In another class, the most numerous now-a-days, the celebrity of the lover, the pleasure of carrying him from a rival, the dread of a reprisal again, totally engage the women. Thus we are concerned more or less in this kind.



of happiness which they enjoy ; but it depends more on circumstances than on the person : it comes to them by us, and not from us.

It was then necessary to find a woman of delicacy and sensation to make my observations on, whose sole concern should be love, and in that passion be absorbed by the lover ; whose emotions, disdaining the common track, should fly from the heart to the senses ; who I have viewed, (I don't mean the first day) rise from the bed of delight all in tears, and the instant after recover voluptuousness by a word that touched her soul. She must also have united that natural candour, which habitude had made insurmountable, and would not suffer her to dissemble the least sentiment of her heart. You must agree with me, such women are scarce ; and I am confident, if I had not met this one, I never should have found another.

There-

Therefore it is not at all surprising she should have fascinated me longer than another; and if the time I spend makes her happy, perfectly happy, why should I refuse it, especially when it is so agreeable to me? But because the mind is engaged, must the heart be enslaved? Certainly not. And the value I set on this adventure will not prevent my engaging in others, or even sacrificing this to some more agreeable one.

I am even so much at liberty, that I have not neglected the little Volanges, to whom I am so little attached. Her mother brings her to town in three days, and I have secured my communication since yesterday; a little money to the porter, a few soft speeches to the waiting maid, did the business. Would you believe it? Danceny never thought of this simple method. Where, then, is the boasted ingenuity of love? Quite the

contrary ; it stupifies its votaries. Shall I not, then, know how to preserve myself from it ? Be not uneasy, in a few days I shall divide the impression, perhaps rather too strong, it made on me, and weaken it ; if one will not do, I will increase them.

Nevertheless, I shall be ready to give up the young pensioner to her discreet lover, when you think proper. I can't see you have any longer reason to oppose it. I freely consent to render poor Danceny this signal service : upon my word, it is but trifling, for all those he has done for me. He is now in the greatest anxiety to know whether he will be admitted at Madame de Volanges's. I keep him as easy as possible, by promising somehow or other to gratify him one of those days ; in the mean time, I take upon me to carry on the correspondence, which he intends to resume on his Cecilia's arrival. I have already

fix

## C O N N E C T I O N S. 81

fix of his letters, and shall have one or two more before the happy day. This lad must have very little to do.

However, let us leave this childish couple, and come to our own business, that I may be entirely engaged with the pleasing hope your letter has given me. Do you doubt of fixing me your's? If you do, I shall not forgive you. Have I ever been inconstant? Our bands have been loosened, but never broken; our pretended rupture was an error only of the imagination; our sentiments, our interests, are still the same. Like the traveller who returned undeceived, I found out, as he did, I quitted happiness to run after hope.\* The more strange lands I saw, the more I loved my country. No longer oppose the idea, or sentiment rather, that brings you back to me. After hav-

\* Du Belloy's tragedy of the Siege of Calais.

ing tried all manner of pleasures in our different excursions, let us sit down and enjoy the happiness of knowing, that none is equal to what we have experienced, and that we shall again find more delicious.

Adieu, my lovely friend ! I consent to wait your return ; however, hasten it as much as possible, and do not forget how much I wish for it.

*Paris, Nov. 8, 17—.*

## L E T T E R CXXXIV.

*Marchioness de MERTEUIL to the Viscount de VALMONT.*

UPON my word, Viscount, you are exactly like the children, before whom one cannot speak a word, nor shew a thing but they must have it immediately. Because I just mention  
an



an idea that came into my head, which I even told you I was not fixed on, you abuse my intention, and want to tie me down, at the time I endeavour to forget it, and force me in a manner to share your thoughtless desires. Are you not very ungenerous to make me bear the whole burthen of prudential care? I must again repeat, and it frequently occurs to me, the method you propose is impossible. When you would even throw in all the generosity you mention, do you imagine I am divested of my delicacies, and I would accept sacrifices prejudicial to your happiness?

My dear Viscount, you certainly deceive yourself in the sentiment that attaches you to M. de Tourvel. It is love, or such a passion never had existence. You deny it in a hundred shapes; but you prove it in a thousand. What means, for example, the subterfuge you use against yourself,  
 I for



for I believe you sincere with me, that makes you relate so circumstantially the desire you can neither conceal nor combat, of keeping this woman? Would not one imagine, you never had made any other happy, perfectly happy? Ah! if you doubt it, your memory is very bad: but that is not the case. To speak plainly, your heart imposes on your understanding, and pays it off with bad arguments: but I, who am so strongly interested not to be deceived, am not so easily blinded.

Thus, as I remarked, your politeness made you carefully suppress every word you thought would displease me, I could not help observing, perhaps, without taking notice of it; nevertheless you preserved the same ideas. It is no longer the adorable, the celestial Madame de Tourvel, but *an astonishing woman, a delicate sentimental woman, even to the exclusion* of

of all others ; *a wonderful woman, such as a second could not be found.* The same way with your unknown charm, which is not *the strongest.* Well ; be it so : but since you never found it out till then, it is much to be apprehended you will never meet it again ; the loss would be irreparable. Those, Viscount, are sure symptoms of love, or we must renounce the hope of ever finding it. You may be assured I am not out of temper now ; and have made a promise, I will not be so any more : I foresee it might become a dangerous snare. Take my word for it, we had better remain as we are, in friendship. Be thankful for my resolution in defending myself ; for sometimes one must have it, not to take a step that may be attended with bad consequences.

It is only to persuade you to be of my opinion, I answer the demand you make, on the sacrifices I would exact,

exact, and you could not make. I designedly use the word exact, because immediately you will think me too exacting — so much the better: far from being angry with your refusal, I shall thank you for it. Observe, I will not dissemble with you; perhaps I have occasion for it.

First I would exact — take notice of the cruelty! that this same rare, this astonishing Madame de Tourvel, should be no more to you than any other woman; that is, a mere woman: for you must not deceive yourself; this charm that you believe is found in others, exists in us, and it is love only embellishes the beloved object so much. What I now require, although so impossible for you to grant, you would not hesitate to promise, nay, even to swear; but I own I would not believe you the more. I could not be convinced, but by the whole tenor of your conduct.

That

That is not all; I should be whimsical, perhaps; the sacrifice you so politely offer me of the little Cecilia, does not give me the least uneasiness: on the contrary, I should require you to continue this toilsome duty until farther orders. Whether I should like thus to abuse my power, or whether more indulgent, or more reasonable, it would satisfy me to dispose of your sentiments without thwarting your pleasures. I would, however, be obeyed, and my commands would be very severe.

Certainly I should think myself obliged to thank you, and, who knows? perhaps to reward you. As for instance, I might shorten an absence, which would be insupportable to me. I should at length see you again, Viscount; and see you again — How? — Remember this is only a conversation, a plain narrative of an im-

impossible scheme. I must not be the only one to forget it.

I must tell you my lawsuit begins to make me a little uneasy. I was determined to know exactly what my pretensions were. My lawyers have quoted me some laws, and a great many *authorities*, at they call them; but I can't perceive so much reason and justice in them. I am almost afraid I did wrong to refuse the compromise; however, I begin to be encouraged, when I consider my attorney is skilful, my lawyer eloquent, and the plaintiff handsome. If those reasons were to be no longer valid, the course of business must be altered; then what would become of the respect for old customs? This lawsuit is actually the only thing keeps me here. That of Belleruche is finished; the indictment quashed, each party to bear their own costs: he even is regretting not to be at the ball to-night; the regret  
of



of a man out of employment. I shall set him free at my return to town. In making this grievous sacrifice, I am consoled by the generosity he finds in it.

Adieu, Viscount ! write to me often. The particulars of your amusements will make me amends partly for the dulness I suffer.

*Castle of ———,*  
*Nov. 11, 17—.*

## LETTER CXXXV.

*The Presidente de TOURVEL to Madame  
de ROSEMONDE.*

I AM now endeavouring to write to you, and know not whether I shall be able. Gracious God ! — excessive happiness prevented my continuing my last letter ; now despair overwhelms me,



me, and leaves me only strength sufficient to tell my sorrows, and deprives me of the power of expressing them. — Valmont — Valmont no longer loves me! He never loved me! Love does not depart thus. He deceived me, he betrayed me, he insults me! I suffer every kind of misfortune and humiliation; and all proceed from him.

Do not think it a mere suspicion. I was far from having any. I have not even the consolation of a doubt: I saw it. What can he say in his justification? — But what matters it to him? He will not attempt it even. — Unhappy wretch! What avail thy reproaches and thy tears? He is not concerned about thee.

It is, then, too true, he has made me a sacrifice; he has even exposed me — and to whom? — To a vile creature. — But what do I say? Ah! I have no right to despise her. She  
has

has not broke through any ties ; she is not so culpable as I am. Oh ! what grief can equal that which is followed by remorse ! I feel my torments increase. Adieu, my dear friend ! though I am unworthy your compassion, still you will have some left for me, if you can form an idea of my sufferings.

I have just read over my letter, and perceive it gives you no information. I will endeavour to muster up resolution to relate this cruel event. It was yesterday, I was to sup abroad for the first time since my return. Valmont came to me at five ; he never appeared so endearing : he did not seem pleased with my intention of going abroad ; I immediately resolved to stay at home. In two hours after, his air and tone changed visibly on a sudden. I don't know any thing escaped me to displease him ; however, he pretended to recollect business that obliged him to leave me, and went away ;

away ; not without expressing a tender concern, which I then thought very sincere.

Being left alone, I resolved to fulfil my first engagement, as I was at liberty. I finished my toilet, and got in my carriage. Unfortunately my coachman drove by the opera, and my carriage was stopped in the crowd coming up. I perceived at a little distance before mine, and the range next to me, Valmont's carriage : my heart instantly palpitated, but not with fear ; and my only wish was, that my carriage should get forward : instead of which, his was obliged to back close to mine. I immediately looked out ; but what was my astonishment to see beside him a well-known courtesan ! I drew back, as you may believe ; I had seen enough to wound my heart : but what you will scarcely credit is, this same girl, being probably in his confidence, did  
2 not

not turn her eyes from me, and with repeated peals of laughter stared me out of countenance.

Notwithstanding my abject state, I suffered myself to be carried to the house where I was to sup. I found it impossible to stay there long; every instant I was ready to faint, and could not refrain from tears.

At my return I wrote to M. de Valmont, and sent my letter immediately; he was not at home. Being determined at all events to be relieved from this miserable state, or have it confirmed for ever, I sent the servant back, with orders to wait: before twelve he came home, telling me the coachman was returned, and had informed him, his master would not be home for the night. This morning I thought it would be better to request he would give up my letters, and beg of him never to see me more. I have given orders accordingly, but certainly

they were useless. It is now near twelve; he has not yet appeared, nor have I received a line from him.

Now, my dear friend, I have nothing farther to add. You are informed of every thing, and you know my heart. My only hope is, I shall not long trouble your tender friendship.

*Paris, Nov. 15, 17—.*

## L E T T E R CXXXVI.

*The Presidente de TOURVEL to the  
Viscount de VALMONT.*

CERTAINLY, Sir, after what passed yesterday, you do not expect I should see you again, and you as certainly do not desire it. The intention of this note, then, is not so much to require you never to come near me

more, as to call on you for my letters, which ought not to have existed. If they could at any time have been interesting, as proofs of the infatuation you had occasioned, they must be, now that is dissipated, indifferent to you, as they were only proofs of a sentiment you have destroyed.

I own, I was very wrong in placing a confidence in you, of which so many before me have been victims ; I accuse no one but myself : but I never thought I deserved to be exposed by you to contempt and insult. I imagined, that making a sacrifice of every thing, and giving up for you my pretensions to the esteem of others, as also my own, I might have expected not to be treated by you with more severity than by the public, whose opinion always makes an immense difference between the weak and the depraved. Those are the only wrongs I shall mention. I shall be silent on



those of love, as your heart would not understand mine. Farewel, Sir!

*Paris, Nov. 15, 17—.*

## L E T T E R CXXXVII.

*Viscount de VALMONT to the Presidente  
de TOURVEL.*

**T**HIS instant only have I received your letter, Madam. I could not read it without shuddering, and have scarcely strength to answer it. What a horrible opinion have you, then, conceived of me! Doubtless, I have my faults, and such as I shall never forgive myself, if even you should hide them with your indulgence. But how distant from my thoughts are those you reproach me! Who, me insult you! Me make you contemptible, at a time when I reverence as much as cherish

cherish you ! when you raised my vanity by thinking me worthy of you ! Appearances have deceived you. I will not deny they make against me : but had you not sufficient within your own heart to contend against them ? Did it not revolt at the idea of having a cause of complaint against me ? Yet you believed it ! Thus you not only thought me capable of this atrocious phrenzy, but even dreaded you had exposed yourself to it by your Indulgence. Ah ! if you think yourself so much degraded by your love, I must be very despicable in your sight. Oppressed by the painful sense of this idea, I lose the time I should employ in destroying it, endeavouring to repel it. I will confess all : another consideration still prevents me. Must I go back to facts I would wish to forget for ever, and recal your attention and my own to errors I shall ever repent ; the cause of which I cannot

yet conceive, which fill me with mortification and despair. If I excite your anger by accusing myself, the means of revenge will not be out of your reach ; it will be sufficient to abandon me to my own remorse.

Yet the first cause of this unhappy event is, the all-powerful charm I feel in being with you : it was it made me too long forget an important business that could not be put off. I stayed with you so long, I did not find the person at home I wanted to see ; I expected to have met her at the opera, where I was also disappointed. Emily, who I met there, and knew at a time when I was a stranger to you and love, Emily had not her carriage, and requested I would set her down at a little distance from thence ; I consented, as a matter of no consequence. It was then I met you. I was instantly seized with the apprehension you would think me guilty.

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The dread of afflicting or displeasing you is so powerful, it is impossible for me to conceal it, and was soon perceived. I will even own, it induced me to prevail on this girl not to shew herself; this precaution, the result of delicacy, was unfavourable to love: but she, like the rest of her tribe, accustomed to the abuse of her usurped power, would not let slip so splendid an opportunity. The more she observed my embarrassment increase, the more she affected to shew herself; and her ridiculous mirth, which I blush to think you could for a moment imagine yourself to be the object, had no other foundation than the cruel anxiety I felt, which proceeded from my love and respect.

So far, doubtless, I am more unfortunate than guilty. Those crimes being thus done away, I am clear of reproach. In vain, however, are you silent on those of love, which I must

break through, as it concerns me so much.

Not but, in my confusion for this unaccountable misconduct, which I cannot without great grief recal to my remembrance ; yet I am so sensible of my error, I would patiently bear the punishment, wait my pardon from time, from my excessive love, and my repentance ; only what I yet have to say concerns your delicacy.

Do not think I seek a pretence to excuse or palliate my fault ; I confess my guilt : but I do not acknowledge, nor ever will, this humiliating error can be a crime of love. For where is the analogy between a surprise of the sensations, a moment of inadvertency, which is soon replaced by shame and regret, and an immaculate sentiment, which delicate souls are only capable of, supported by esteem, and of which happiness is the fruit ? Ah ! do not thus profane love ; or, rather, do not  
pro-



profane yourself, by uniting in the same point of view what never can be blended. Leave to despicable and degraded women the dread of a rivalry, and experience the torments of a cruel and humiliating jealousy; but turn your eyes from objects that would sully them: and pure as the Divinity, punish the offence without feeling it.

What punishment can you inflict on me will be more sorrowful than what I already feel — that can be comparable to the grief of having incurred your displeasure—to the despair of giving you affliction—to the unsufferable idea of being unworthy of you? Your mind is taken up with punishing, whilst I languish for consolation; not that I deserve it, but only that I am in want of it, and that it is you alone can console me.

If on a sudden, forgetful of our mutual love as of my happiness, you will abandon me to perpetual sorrow, I



shall not dispute your right — strike : but should you incline to indulgence, and again recal those tender sentiments that united our hearts ; that voluptuousness of soul, ever renewing, ever increasing ; those delightful days we passed together ; all the felicities that love only can give ; you will, perhaps, prefer the power of renewing to that of destroying them. What shall I say ? I have lost all, and lost it by my own folly : but still all may be retrieved by your goodness. You are now to decide. I shall add but one word more. Yesterday you swore my happiness was certain whilst it depended on you. Ah ! will you this day, then, Madam, give me up to everlasting despair ?

*Paris, Nov. 15, 17—.*

L E T.

L E T T E R CXXXVIII.

*Viscount de VALMONT to the Marchio-  
ness de MERTEUIL.*

**I** Insist on it, my charming friend, I am not in love; and it is not my fault, if circumstances oblige me to play the character of a lover. — Only consent to return, and you will be able to judge my sincerity — I made my proofs yesterday, and cannot be injured by what happens to-day.

I was with the tender prude, having nothing else to do; for the little Volanges, notwithstanding her situation, was to spend the night at Madame de V—'s early ball: the want of business first gave me an inclination to prolong the evening; and I had, with this inten-

tion, even required a little sacrifice: it was scarcely granted, than the pleasure I promised myself was disturbed with the idea of this love which you so obstinately will have it, or at least reproach me with being infected; so I determined at once to be certain myself, and convince you, that it was a calumny of your own.

In consequence I took a violent resolution; on a very slight pretence, I took leave, and left my fair one quite surprised, and doubtless more afflicted, while I quietly went to meet Emily at the opera: she can satisfy you, that until morning, when we parted, no regret disturbed our amusements.

Yet there was a pretty large field for uneasiness, if my total indifference had not preserved me: for you must know, I was scarce four houses from the opera, with Emily in my carriage, when that of the austere devotee ranged close beside mine, and a stop which happened,  
left

left us near half a quarter of an hour close by each other; we could see one another as plain as at noon-day, and there was no means to escape.

That is not all; I took it in my head to tell Emily confidentially, that was the letter-woman. You may recollect, perhaps, that piece of folly, and that Emily was the desk\*. She did not forget it, and as she laughs immoderately, she was not easy until she had attentively viewed this piece of virtue, as she called her; and with scandalous bursts, such as would even disconcert effrontery.

Still this is not all; the jealous woman sent to my house that same night; I was not at home, but she obstinately sent a second time, with orders to wait my return. I sent my carriage home, as soon as I resolved to spend the night with Emily, without any other orders to my coachman, than to

\* Letters xli and xlvii.

return this morning. When he got home he found the messenger, whom he informed I was not to return that night. You may guess the effect of this news, and that at my return, I found my discharge announced with all the dignity the circumstance required.

Thus, this adventure, which according to your opinion, was never to be determined, could, as you see, have been ended this morning? if it should not, I would not have you think I prize a continuance of it; but I do not think it consistent with my character to be quitted: moreover, I intend to reserve the honour of this sacrifice for you.

I have answered her severe note with a long sentimental epistle; I have given long reasons, and rely on love to make them acceptable. I have already succeeded — I have received a second note, still very rigorous, and which confirms an everlasting rupture, as it  
ought

ought to be — but the ton is not the same; I must not be seen again; this resolution is announced four times in the most irrevocable manner. From thence I concluded, there was not a moment to be lost in presenting myself: I have already sent my huntsman to secure the porter, and shall follow instantly, to have my pardon sealed: for in crimes of this nature, there is only one form for a general absolution, and that must be executed in each others presence.

Adieu, my charming friend! I fly to achieve this grand event.

*Paris, Nov. 15, 17—.*

LET.



**L E T T E R CXXXIX.**

*The Presidente de TOURVEL to Ma-  
dame de ROSEMONDE.*

**H**OW I reproach myself, my dear friend, for having wrote too soon, and said too much of my transitory troubles! I am the cause you at present are afflicted; the chagrin I have given you still continues, and I am happy; yes, every thing is forgot, and I forgive; or rather all is cleared up. Calm and delight succeed this state of grief and anguish; how shall I express the ecstasy of my heart! Valmont is innocent: with so much love there can be no guilt — those heavy offensive crimes with which I loaded him so bitterly, he did not deserve; and although I was right in one single point,

point, yet I was to make reparation for my unjust suspicions.

I will not relate minutely the circumstances of facts or reasonings in his justification — Perhaps even the mind would but badly appreciate them, — it is the heart only can feel them. However, were you even to suspect me of weakness, I would call on your judgment in support of my own; you say among men infidelity is not inconstancy.

Not but I am sensible, this opinion, which custom authorises, hurts delicacy: but why should mine complain, when Valmont's suffers more? This same injury which I forget, I do not think he forgives himself; and yet he has immensely repaired this trivial error, by the excess of his love, and my happiness!

My felicity is greater, or I know the value of it better, since my dread  
of

of losing him ; I can aver to you, if I had strength sufficient to undergo again such cruel chagrins as I have just experienced, I should not think I had purchased my increase of happiness at too high a rate. Oh, my dear mother ! scold your unthinking daughter for afflicting you by her precipitation ; scold her for having rashly judged him she should ever adore ; and knowing her imprudence, see her happy : augment her bliss by partaking it.

*Paris Nov. 15, 17.—*

LET-

## L E T T E R CXL.

*The Viscount de VALMONT to the Marchioness de MERTEUIL.*

**H**OW comes it, my charming friend, I receive no answers from you? I think, however, my last letter deserved one; these three days have I been expecting it, and must still wait! I really am vexed, and shall not relate a syllable of my grand affairs.

Such as the reconciliation had its full effect; that instead of reproaches and diffidence, it produced fresh proofs of affection; that I now actually receive the excuse and satisfaction due to my suspected candour; not a word shall you know—had it not been for  
the

the unforeseen event of last night, I should not have wrote to you at all; but as it relates to your pupil, who probably cannot give you any information herself, at least for some time, I have taken upon me to acquaint you with it.

For reasons you may or may not guess, Madame de Tourvel, has not engaged my attention for some days: as those reasons could not exist with the little Volanges, I became more assiduous there. Thanks to the obliging porter, I had no obstacles to surmount; and your pupil and I led a comfortable, regular life — Custom brings on negligence; at first we had not taken proper precautions for our security; we trembled behind the locks: yesterday an incredible absence of mind occasioned the accident I am going to relate; as to myself, fear was my only punishment, but the little girl did not come off so well.

We

We were not asleep, but reposing in the abandonment consequent to voluptuousness, when on a sudden, we heard the room door open, I instantly seized my sword to defend myself and our pupil; I advanced, and saw no one; but the door was open: as we had a light, I examined all about the room, and did not find a mortal; then I recollected we had forgot our usual precautions, and certainly the door being only pushed or not properly shut, opened of itself.

Returning to my terrified companion to quiet her, I did not find her in the bed; she fell out, or hid herself by the bedside; at length I found her there, stretched senseless on the ground, in strong convulsions—You may judge my embarrassment—However, I brought her to herself, and got her into bed again, but she had hurt herself in the fall, and was not long before she felt its effect.

Pains



Pains in the loins, violent cholics, and other symptoms less equivocal, soon informed me her condition — To make her sensible of it, it was necessary to acquaint her with the one she was in before, of which she had not the least suspicion: never any one before her, perhaps, went to work so innocently to get rid of it—she does not lose her time in reflection.

But she lost a great deal in afflicting herself, and I found it necessary to come to some resolution: therefore we agreed I should immediately go to the physician and surgeon of the family, to inform them they would be sent for; I was to make them a confidence of the whole business, under a promise of secrecy — That she should ring for her waiting maid, and should or should not make her a confidence of her situation, as she thought proper; but at all events, send for assistance, and should forbid her

her from disturbing Madame de Volanges. An attentive delicacy natural to a girl who feared to give her mother uneasiness.

I made my two visits and confessions as expeditiously as I could, and then went home, from whence I have not since stirred. The surgeon, who I knew before, came to me at noon, to give me an account of the state of his patient — I was not mistaken — He hopes, however, it will not be attended with any bad consequences. Provided no accident happens, it will not be discovered in the house; the waiting woman is in the secret; the physician has given the disorder a name, and this affair will be settled as a thousand others have been, unless hereafter it might be useful to us to have it mentioned.

Have you and I mutual interests or no? Your silence makes me dubious of it; I would not even think at all of  
it,

it, if my inclinations did not lead me on to every method of preserving the hope of it. Adieu, my charming friend! yet in anger.

*Paris, Nov. 21, 17.—*

## L E T T E R C X L I.

*The Marchioness de MERTEUIL to the  
Viscount de VALMONT.*

GOOD God, Viscount! How troublesome you are with your obstinacy! What matters my silence to you? Do you believe it is for want of reasons I am silent? Ah! would to God! But no, it is only because it would be painful to tell them to you.

Speak

Speak truth, do you deceive yourself, or do you mean to deceive me? The difference between your discourse and actions, leaves in doubt which I am to give credit to. What shall I say to you then, when I even do not know what to think?

You seem to make a great merit of your last scene with the President; but what does that prove in support of your system, or against mine? I never certainly told you, your love for this woman was so violent as not be capable of deceiving her, or prevent you from enjoying every opportunity that appeared agreeable and easy to you. I never even doubted but it would be equally the same to you, to satisfy, with any other, the first that offered, the desires she would raise. I am not at all surpris'd, that from a libertinism of mind, which it would be wrong to contend with you,

you have once done designedly, what you have a thousand times done occasionally — Don't we well know this is the way of the world, and the practice of you all? and whoever acts otherwise is looked on as a simpleton — I think I don't charge you with this defect.

What I have said, what I have thought, what I still think, is, you are nevertheless in love with your Presidente: not if you will with a pure and tender passion, but of that kind of which you are capable; for example, of that kind which makes you discover in a woman, charms and qualities she has not: which ranks her in a class by herself, and still links you to her even while you insult her — Such, in a word, as a Sultan has for a favourite Sultana; that does not prevent him from often giving the preference to a plain Odalisk. My comparison appears to me the more just,

as, like him, you never are the lover or friend of a woman, but always her tyrant or her slave. And I am very certain, you very much humbled and debased yourself very much, to get into favour again with this fine object! Happy in your success, as soon as you think the moment arrived to obtain your pardon, you leave me *for this grand event*.

Even in your last letter, the reason you give for not entertaining me solely with this woman is, because you will not tell me any thing of your *grand affairs*; they are of so much importance, that your silence on that subject is to be my punishment: and after giving me such strong proofs of a decided preference for another, you coolly ask me whether *we have a mutual interest*! Have a care, Viscount; if I once answer you, my answer shall be irrevocable: and to be in suspense, is perhaps saying too much; I will



therefore now say no more of that matter.

I have nothing more to say, but to tell you a trifling story ; perhaps you will not have leisure to read it, or to give so much attention to it as to understand it properly ? At worst, it will be only a tale thrown away.

A man of my acquaintance, like you, was entangled with a woman, who did him very little credit; he had sense enough, at times, to perceive, this adventure would hurt him one time or other — Although he was ashamed of it, yet he had not the resolution to break off — His embarrassment was greater, as he had frequently boasted to his friends, he was intirely at liberty; and was not insensible, the more he apologised, the more the ridicule increased — Thus, he spent his time incessantly in foolery, and constantly saying, *it is not my fault*. This man had a friend, who was one  
time

time very near giving him up in his frenzy to indelible ridicule: but yet, being more generous than malicious, or perhaps from some other motive, she resolved, as a last effort, to try a method to be able, at least, with her friend, to say, *it is not my fault*. She therefore sent him, without farther ceremony, the following letter, as a remedy for his disorder.

“ One tires of every thing, my  
“ angel! It is a law of nature; it is  
“ not my fault.

“ If, then, I am tired of a connec-  
“ tion that has intirely taken me up  
“ four long months, it is not my  
“ fault.

“ If, for example, I had just as  
“ much love as you had virtue, and  
“ that’s saying a great deal, it is not  
“ at all surprising that one should end  
“ with the other; it is not my fault.

“ It follows, then, that for some  
“ time past, I have deceived you; but  
“ your unmerciful affection in some  
“ measure forced me to it! It is not  
“ my fault.

“ Now a woman I love to distrac-  
“ tion, insists I must sacrifice you:  
“ it is not my fault.

“ I am sensible here is a fine field  
“ for reproaches; but if nature has  
“ only granted men constancy, whilst  
“ it gives obstinacy to women, it is  
“ not my fault.

“ Take my advice, chuse another  
“ lover, as I have another mistress—  
“ The advice is good; if you think  
“ otherwise, it is not my fault.

“ Farewel, my angel! I took you  
“ with pleasure, I part you without  
“ regret; perhaps I shall return to  
“ you; it is the way of the world;  
“ it is not my fault.”

This is not the time to tell you,  
Viscount, the effect of this last effort,  
and

and its consequences; but I promise to give it you in my next letter; you will then receive also my ultimatum on renewing the treaty you propose. Until when, adieu.

Now I think on it, receive my thanks for your particular account of the little Volanges; that article will keep till the day after her wedding, for the scandalous gazette. I console with you, however, on the loss of your progeny. Good night, Viscount.

*Nov. 24, 17—.*

*Castle of —*

F 4

L E T-

## L E T T E R CXLII.

*Viscount de VALMONT to the Marchioness  
de MERTEUIL.*

I Don't know, my charming friend, whether I have read or understood badly your letter, the little tale you relate, and the epistolary model it contains — But this I must say, the last is an original, and seems very proper to take effect; therefore I only copied it, and sent it without farther ceremony to the celestial Presidente. I did not lose a moment, for the tender epistle was dispatched yesterday evening—I chose to act so; for first, I had promised to write to her; and, moreover, I thought a whole night not too much for her to collect herself,

herself, and ruminate on *this grand event*, were you even to reproach me a second time with the expression.

I expected to have sent you back this morning my well-beloved's answer; it is now near twelve, and it is not yet come — I shall wait until five; and if I receive no news by that time, I shall in person seek it, for every thing must be done according to form, and the difficulty is only in this first step.

Now you may believe I am impatient to know the end of your story of that man of your acquaintance, who was so violently suspected of not knowing how to sacrifice a woman upon occasion — Did he not amend, and did not his generous friend forgive him?

I am no less anxious to receive your ultimatum as you call it so politically; but I am curious, above all, to know if you can perceive any impres-



sion of love in this last proceeding? Ah! doubtless there is, and a good deal! But for whom? Still I make no pretensions; I expect every thing from your goodness.

Adieu, charmer! I shall not close my letter until two, in hope of adding the wished-for answer.

*Two o'clock in the afternoon.*

Nothing yet—the time slips away; I can't spare a moment — but surely now you will not refuse the tenderest kisses of love.

*Paris, Nov. 27, 17—*

LET

## L E T T E R CXXVIII.

*The Presidente de TOURVEL to Madame de ROSEMONDE.*

THE veil is rent, Madam, on which was painted my illusory happiness — The fatal truth is cleared, that leaves me no prospect but an assured and speedy death; and my road is traced between shame and remorse. I will follow it — I will cherish my torments if they will shorten my existence — I send you the letter I received yesterday; it needs no reflections; it contains them all — This is not a time for lamentation — nothing remains but sufferings — I want not pity, I want strength.

Receive, Madame, the only adieu I shall make, and grant my last request:

quest: leave me to my fate — forget me totally — do not reckon me among the living. There is a limit in misery, when even friendship augments our sufferings and cannot cure them — When wounds are mortal, all relief is cruel. Every sentiment but despair is foreign to my soul — nothing can now suit me, but the darkness where I am going to bury my shame — There will I weep crimes, if I yet can weep; for since yesterday I have not shed a tear — my withered heart no longer furnishes any.

Adieu, Madame! Do not reply to this—I have taken a solemn oath on this letter never to receive another.

*Paris, Nov. 27, 17—*

LET-

## L E T T E R CXLIV.

*Viscount de VALMONT to the Marchioness de MERTEUIL.*

**Y**ESTERDAY, at three in the afternoon, being impatient, my lovely friend, at not having any news, I presented myself at the house of the fair abandoned, and was told she was gone out. In this reply I could see nothing more than a refusal to admit me, which neither surprised nor vexed me; I retired, in hope this step would induce so polished a woman to give me an answer. The desire I had to receive one, made me call home about nine, but found nothing. Astonished at this silence, which I did not expect, I sent my huntsman on the enquiry for information, whether the tender  
fair

fair was dead or dying. At my return, he informed me, Madame de Tourvel had actually gone out at eleven in the morning with her waiting maid ; that she ordered her carriage to the convent of — ; that at seven in the evening she had sent her carriage and servants back, sending word they should not expect her home. This is certainly acting with propriety. The convent is the only asylum for a widow ; and if she persists in so laudable a resolution, I shall add to all the obligations I already lay under, the celebrity this adventure will now have.

I told you sometime ago, notwithstanding your uneasiness, I would again appear in the world with more brilliant eclat. Let those severe critics now show themselves, who accused me of a romantic passion ; let them make a more expeditious and shining rupture : no, let them do  
more ;

more ; bid them go offer their consolations—the road is chalked out for them ; let them only dare run the career I have gone over entirely, and if any one obtains the least success, I will yield him up the first place : but they shall all experience when I am in earnest ; the impression I leave is indelible. This one I affirm will be so. I should even look on all former triumphs as trifles, if I was ever to have a favoured rival.

I own the step she has taken flatters my vanity ; yet I am sorry she had so much fortitude to separate from me. There will be no obstacle, then, between us, but of my own formation. If I should be inclined to renew our connection, she, perhaps, would refuse ; perhaps not pant for it, not think it the summit of happiness ! Is this love ? And do you think, my charming friend, I should bear it ? Could I not, for example, and would  
it



it not be better, endeavour to bring this woman to the point of foreseeing a possibility of a reconciliation, always wished for while there is hope? I could try this course without any consequence, without giving you umbrage. It would be only a mere trial we would make in concert. Even if I should be successful, it would be only an additional means of renewing, at your pleasure, a sacrifice which has seemed agreeable to you. Now, my charming friend, I am yet to receive my reward, and all my vows are for your return. Come, then, speedily to your lover, your pleasures, your friends, and the pursuit of adventures.

That of the little Volanges has had a surprising turn. Yesterday, as my uneasiness would not suffer me to stay long in a place, in my various excursions I called at Madame Volanges's. I found your pupil in the saloon, in  
the

the drapery of a sick person, but in full health, fresher, and more interesting. Some of you ladies, in such a case would keep your beds for a month, . Oh, rare lasses! Egad, this one has given me a strong inclination to know if the cure be complete.

I had almost forgot to tell you, the little girl's accident had like to have turned your *sentimental* Danceny's brain: at first it was for grief, but now it is with joy. *His Cecilia* was sick. You will agree, the brain must turn with such a misfortune. Three times a day did he send to enquire about her, and never missed every day going himself; at last, he wrote a fine epistle to the mama, begging leave to go and congratulate her on the recovery of so dear an object; Madame de Volanges assented; so that I found the young man established as heretofore, only not quite so familiar. This narrative I had from himself; for I came

came out with him, and made him prate. You can't conceive what an effect this visit had on him ; his joy, his wishes, his transports are inexpressible. As I am fond of grand emotions, I finished him, by telling him, in a few days I hoped to place him much nearer his fair one.

I am determined to give her up to him as soon as I have made my trial. I will devote myself intirely to you ; moreover, I don't see it would be worth while your pupil should be my scholar, if she had only a husband to deceive. The *chef d'œuvre* is to deceive the lover ! and the first lover too ! For I can't reproach myself with even having pronounced the word love.

Adieu, my lovely friend ! Return as soon as possible to resume your empire over me, to receive my homage, and give me my reward.

Paris, Nov. 28, 17—.

LETTER

L E T-

## L E T T E R CXLV.

*The Marchioness de MERTEUIL to the  
Viscount de VALMONT.*

**N**OW seriously, Viscount, have you left the Presidente? Did you send her the letter I wrote you for her? You are a charming fellow, indeed, and have surpassed my expectations! I must own, this triumph flatters me more than all those I ever obtained. You will think, perhaps, I estimate this woman very highly, who I depreciated very lately; not in the least: but it is not over her this advantage is gained; it is over you; there lies the jest, and it is really delightful.

Yes, Viscount, you loved Madame de Tourvel much, and you still love her; you love her to distraction: but  
because

because I made you ashamed, by way of amusement, you nobly sacrifice her. You would have sacrificed a thousand women rather than be laughed at. To what lengths will not vanity lead us! The wise man was right when he said it was the foe to happiness.

What would become of you now, if it had been only a trick I put upon you? But I am incapable of deceit, and you know it well; and should you even in my turn reduce me to despair and a convent, I will risk it, and surrender to my conqueror. Still, if I do capitulate, upon my word it is from mere frailty; for were I inclined, how many cavils could I not start! and, perhaps, you would deserve them!

I admire, for example, with how much address, or awkwardness rather, you soothingly propose I should let you renew with your Presidente. It would be very convenient, would it not?



not? to take all the merit of this rupture without losing the pleasure of enjoyment! And then this proffered sacrifice, which would no longer be one to you, is offered to be renewed at my pleasure! By this arrangement, the celestial devotee would always think herself the only choice of your heart, whilst I should wrap myself up in the pride of being the preferred rival; we should both be deceived; you would be satisfied: all the rest is of no consequence.

It is much to be lamented, that with such extraordinary talents for projects, you have so few for execution; and that by one inconsiderate step, you put an insurmountable obstacle to what you so much wished.

What! you had, then, an idea of renewing your connection, and yet you copied my letter! You must, then, have thought me awkward indeed! Believe me, Viscount, when a woman strikes



strikes at the heart of another, she seldom misses her blow, and the wound is incurable. When I struck this one, or rather directed the blow, I did not forget she was my rival, that you had for a moment preferred her to me, placed me beneath her. If I am deceived in my revenge, I consent to bear the blame; therefore, I agree you may attempt every means; even I invite you to it, and promise you I shall not be angry at your success. I am so easy on this matter, I shall say no more of it: let us talk of something else.

As to the health of the little Volanges, you will be able to give me some positive news at my return. I shall be glad to have some. After that, you will be the best judge whether it will be most convenient to give the little girl up to her lover, or endeavour to be the founder of a new branch of the Valmonts, under the  
name

name of Gercourt. This idea pleases me much : but in leaving the choice to yourself, I must yet require you will not come to a definitive resolution until we talk the matter over. It is not putting you off for a long time, for I shall be in Paris immediately. I can't positively say the day ; but be assured, as soon as I arrive, you shall be the first informed of it.

Adieu, Viscount ! notwithstanding my quarrels, my mischievousness, and my reproaches, I always love you much, and am preparing to prove it. Adieu, till our next meeting.

*Castle of —,*  
*Nov. 29, 17—.*

L E T.

## L E T T E R CXLVI.

*The Marchioness de MERTEUIL to the  
Chevalier DANCENY.*

**A**T last I set out, my young friend ; to-morrow evening I shall be in Paris. The hurry always attending a removal will prevent me from seeing any one. Yet if you should have any pressing confidential business to impart, I shall except you from the general rule : but I except you alone ; therefore request my arrival may be a secret. I shall not even inform Valmont of it.

Whoever would have told me, sometime ago, you would have my exclusive confidence, I would not have believed them : but your's drew on mine. I should be inclined to  
think

think you had made use of some address, or, perhaps, seduction. That would be wrong, indeed ! however, it would not at present be very dangerous ; you have other business in hand. When the heroine is on the stage, we seldom take notice of the confidant.

And, indeed, you have not had time to impart your late success to me. When your Cecilia was absent, the days were too short to listen to your plaintive strains. You would have told them to the echo, if I had not been ready to hear them. Since, when she was ill, you even honoured me with a recital of your troubles ; you wanted some one to tell them to : but now your love is in Paris, that she is quite recovered, and you sometimes see her, your friends are quite neglected.

I do not blame you in the least, it is a fault of youth ; for it is a received

Vol. IV. G truth,

truth, that from Alcibiades down to you, young people are unacquainted with friendship but in adversity. Happiness sometimes makes them indiscreet, but never presumptuous. I will say, with Socrates, *I like my friends to come to me when they are unhappy* : but, as a philosopher, he did very well without them if they did not come. I am not quite so wise as he, for I felt your silence with all the weakness of a woman.

However, do not think me too exacting ; far from it. The same sentiment that leads me to observe those privations, makes me bear them with fortitude, when they are proofs, or the cause of the happiness of my friends. I shall, therefore, not depend on you for to-morrow evening, only as far as is consistent with love and want of occupation ; and I positively forbid you to make me the least sacrifice.

Adieu,

Adieu, Chevalier ! it will be an absolute regale to see you again — will you come ?

*Castle of —*

*Nov. 29, 17—.*

L E T T E R CXLVII.

*Madame de VOLANGES to Madame de  
ROSEMONDE.*

YOU will most assuredly be as much afflicted, my dear friend, as I am, when I acquaint you with Madame de Tourvel's state ; she has been indisposed since yesterday : she was taken so suddenly, and her disorder is of such an alarming nature, that I am really frightened about it.

A burning fever, an almost constant and violent delirium, a perpetual thirst, are the symptoms. The phy-



ficians say, they cannot as yet form their prognostics; and their endeavours are frustrated, as the patient obstinately refuses every kind of remedy: infomuch, that they were obliged to use force to bleed her; and were twice since forced to use the same method, to tie up the bandages, which she tore off in her fits.

You and I, who have seen her, so weak, so timid, so mild, could hardly conceive that four persons scarcely could hold her; and on the least remonstrance she flies out in the greatest rage imaginable: for my part, I fear it is something worse than a raving, and borders on downright madness.

And what happened the day before yesterday adds to my fears.

On that day she came about eleven in the morning to the convent of — with her waiting maid. As she was educated in that house, and occasion-  
ally

ally came to visit there, she was received as usual, and appeared to every one in good health and very quiet. In about two hours after she asked, whether the room she had, whilst she was a pensioner, was vacant? and being answered in the affirmative, she begged leave to see it; the prioress and some of the nuns accompanied her. She then declared she came back to settle in this room, which, said she, I ought never to have quitted; adding, she would not depart from it *until death*: that was her expression.

At first, they stared at each other: but the first surprise being over, they remonstrated, that, as a married woman, she could not be received without a special permission. That, and a thousand other arguments were unavailable; and from that moment she was obstinate, not only to remain in the convent, but even not to stir from

the room. At length, being tired out, they consented, at seven in the evening, she should remain there that night. Her carriage and servants were sent home, and they adjourned until the next day.

I have been assured, during the whole night her appearance and deportment did not exhibit the least wandering symptom ; on the contrary, she seemed composed and deliberate ; only fell into a profound reverie four or five times, which conversation could not remove ; and every time before she recovered from it, she seemed forcibly to squeeze her forehead with both hands : on which one of the nuns asked her if she had a pain in her head ; she fixed her eyes on her sometime before she replied, and said, “ My disorder is not there.” Immediately after she begged to be left alone, and also, that in future  
they

they should not put any questions to her.

Every one retired except her waiting maid, who was fortunately obliged to sleep in the same chamber.

According to the girl's account, her mistress was pretty quiet until about eleven at night; then she said she would go to bed: but before she was quite undressed, she walked to and fro in her room with much action and gesture. Julie, who was present at every thing that passed during the day, did not dare say a word, and silently waited near an hour. At length, Madame de Tourvel called her twice on a sudden; she had scarce time to reach her, when her mistress dropped in her arms, saying, "I can hold out no longer." She suffered her to lead her to her bed; but would not take any thing, nor allow her to call for assistance. She ordered her

only to leave her some water, and go to bed.

The girl avers, she did not go to sleep till two in the morning, and heard neither disturbance nor complaint. At five she was awoke by her mistress, who spoke in a strong loud tone. She asked, if she wanted any thing; but receiving no answer, she went to Madame de Tourvel's bedside with a light, who did not know her; but breaking off her incoherent discourse, exclaimed violently, "Leave me alone! Let me be left in darkness! It is darkness alone suits me!" I remarked yesterday, she often repeated those expressions.

At last, Julie took this opportunity to go out and call for assistance, which Madame de Tourvel refused with the greatest fury and madness. These fits have often returned since.

The distress the whole convent was thrown in, induced the Prioress to send



send for me yesterday morning at seven, when it was not yet day. I went immediately. When I was announced to Madame de Tourvel, she seemed to come to herself, and said, "Ah! " yes, let her come in." She fixed her eyes on me when I came near her bed, and seizing my hand suddenly, she squeezed it, saying, in a strong, melancholy tone, " I die for not having taken your advice;" and immediately covering her eyes, she resumed her delirium of " Leave me " alone," &c. and lost all reason.

Those discourses, and some others that fell from her in her delirium, make me apprehend this dreadful disorder has still a more cruel cause: but let us respect the secrets of our friend, and pity her misfortune.

All yesterday was equally stormy, either fits of frightful deliriousness, or lethargic faintness, the only time when she takes or gives any rest. I



did not leave her bed's head until nine at night, and am going again this morning for the day.

I will not certainly abandon our unhappy friend : but her obstinacy in refusing all help and assistance is very distressing.

I inclose you the journal of last night, which I have just received, and which, as you will see, brings but little consolation. I will take care to send them you regularly.

Adieu, my worthy friend ! I am going to visit our poor friend. My daughter, who is perfectly recovered, presents her compliments to you.

*Paris, Nov. 29, 17—*

L E T.